

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 EB-07 FEA-01 IO-13 ERDA-05 AID-05

CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 SAM-01

OES-06 SP-02 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 /105 W

----- 105339

O R 011656Z DEC 76 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1157

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 11309

DEPARTMENT PASS OTHER POSTS AS DESIRED

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, PFOR, OUA, OPEC

SUBJ: DEMARCHE ON OPEC PRICE DECISION

REF: A. STATE 290668 B. STATE 282460

1. I USED OCCASION OF MY INITIAL CALL YESTERDAY ON FINANCE MINISTER BEDIE TO PRESENT OUR VIEWS ON DISRUPTIVE CONSEQUENCES OF POSSIBLE NEW INCREASE IN PETROLEUM PRICES AND TO ELICIT IVORIAN ASSISTANCE WITH AFRICAN MEMBERS OF OPEC PRIOR TO DECEMBER OPEC MEETING. I TOLD BEDIE THAT, AS I BELIEVED, GOIC SHARED OUR CONCERNS, OAU MINISTERIAL MEETING IN KINSHASA WOULD PROVIDE EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR IVORIANS TO COUNSEL MODERATION ON OIL-PRODUCING OAU MEMBERS.

2. BEDIE ACKNOWLEDTED THAT GOIC, WITH AN ANNUAL PETROLEUM BILL OF ABOUT 100 MILLION DOLLARS, WISHED TO HEAD OFF ANY NEW INCREASE IN PETROLEUM PRICES.

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HE WAS NOT SURE, HOWEVER, HOW EFFECTIVE REPRESENTA-

TIONS BY GOIC WOULD BE, WHETHER INSIDE OR OUTSIDE OAU CONTEXT. HE SAID THAT FOREIGN MINISTER USHER WOULD BE REPRESENTING IVORY COAST AT KINSHASA MEETING AND HE WOULD DISCUSS SUBJECT WITH USHER TO SEE WHETHER AN APPROACH BY FOREIGN MINISTER, PERHAPS AN INFORMAL ONE, TO OIL PRODUCERS AT KINSHASA WOULD BE FEASIBLE.

3. I REMARKED TO BEDIE THAT WE HAD NOTED PLEAS BY MINISTER OF PLAN DIAWARA IN HIS OPENING ADDRESS EARLIER THIS WEEK TO CLUB DE DAKAR, CURRENTLY MEETING IN ABIDJAN, FOR A SYSTEM OF PREFERENTIAL PRICING WHICH WOULD BENEFIT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHICH WERE NON-OIL PRODUCERS. I COULD NOT, OF COURSE, SAY WHETHER AN APPROACH OF THIS KIND WOULD BE APT TO STIR THE HEARTS OF OPEC--IT SEEMED TO ME ON THE FACE OF THE MATTER THAT USCH A SYSTEM WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT--BUT I THOUGHT THAT IT WAS A TACTICAL MISTAKE TO SPLIT THE RANKS OF THE NON-OIL PRODUCERS PRIOR TO THE OPEC MEETING. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT ALL OF US AS PETROLEUM CONSUMERS WERE IN THE SAME BOAT AND OUR BEST CHANCE OF PERSUADING OPEC TO BE FARSIGHTED LAY IN MAINTAINING A SOLID FRONT. BEDIE REPEATED THAT GOIC SHARED OUR CONCERNS BUT NOTED THAT A GOIC APPROACH AT KINSHASA WOULD HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED IN ADVANCE WITH PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY. HE SAID AGAIN THAT HE WOULD RAISE THE SUBJECT WITH USHER, AND IF POSSIBLE WITH HOUPHOUET, AND SUGGESTED THAT I ALSO TALK TO USHER BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR KINSHASA IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

4. THIS MORNING I TELEPHONED FOREIGN MINISTER AND MADE SAME POINTS TO HIM. USHER'S INITIAL REACTION WAS THAT US WAS IN A BETTER POSITION THAN THE IVORY COAST TO EXERT PRESSURE ON OPEC. HE AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT OUR BASIC INTERESTS IN AVOIDING A NEW PRICE INCREASE WERE THE SAME AND THAT THE GOIC MIGHT PLAY A USEFUL ROLE WITH ITS FELLOW OAU MEMBERS. WITHOUT MAKING ANY PROMISES, HE SAID THAT HE WOULD SEE WHAT COULD BE DONE.

5. COMMENT: THE TIMING OF THE CLUB DE DAKAR MEETINGS
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IN ABIDJAN, WITH THEIR INVITABLE FOCUS ON THE COMMON INTERESTS OF DEVELOPING STATES, WHETHER OIL PRODUCING OR NOT, MAKES THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE IN ABIDJAN LESS RECEPTIVE TO OUR APPROACH THAN IT MIGHT OTHERWISE BE. DIAWARA'S CALL FOR PREFERENTIAL PRICING ARRANGEMENTS (WHICH WE ARE REPORTING BY SEPTTEL) WILL PRESUMABLY BE SUPERFICIALLY APPEALING TO OTHER NON- PRODUCERS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. FOR THIS REASON

IT SEEMS TO US IMPORTANT TO DEVELOP PLAUSIBLE COUNTER-
ARGUMENTS DESIGNED TO CONVINCE STATES LIKE THE IVORY
COAST THAT THEIR BEST HOPE OF RESTRAINING OPEC WILL
BE IN CLOSING RANKS ON THE ISSUE WITH THE INDUSTRIAL-
IZED STATES. MEANSHILE, I THINK THAT WE HAVE DONE ALL
WE CAN USEFULLY DO WITH THE IVORIANS AT THIS STAGE,
ALTHOUGH IF DEPARTMENT HAS ADDITIONAL ARGUMENTS WE
WILL FIND OCCASIONS TO CONVEY THEM TO GOIC IN COMING
WEEKS BEFORE OPEC MEETING.
STEARNS

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